Indo-US agreement on environmental issues

5447. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will tne Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government of India and the United States of America have recently signed an agreement for pursuing a common agenda on environmental issues concerning both the countries; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the agreement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) The Government of India and the Government of United States of America have recently signed a Common Agenda for the Environment to initiate dialogue, exchange of informotion and cooperation on approaches to meeting both global and domestic environmental challenges. The Agenda seeks to share perspectives and positions on key global environmental issues such as global warming, ozone layer depletion, desertification, biodiversity conservation and management of hazardous wastes, facilitate scientific and technological research to address environmental problems of mutual concern, promote exchange of information on environmentally sound technologies, seek increased efficiency in utilisation and mobilisation of funds for meeting environmental challenges and finally support the implementation of India's Environmental Action Programme.

Smuggling of Birds

5448. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH:
SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:
SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's atetntion has been drawn to a report published in the Metropolitan issue of the 'Hindustan Times' of 8th February, 1995 under the heading "Ten thousand Dollars for a feathered-capped souls";

(b) if so, whether bird smuggling has become a flourishing venture in the country and the walled city of Delhi is the main centre for this racket;

(c) if so, what are the facts in this regard the number of birds smuggled out of Delhi and other places in the country, particularly to European and the Gulf countries;

(d) what is the estimated value of birds smuggled out of the country during each of the last three years;

(e) what steps Government have taken to check this multimillion dollar smuggling of wild life products and rare birds; and

(f) what is the number and names of persons involved and arrested so far in this racket?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is a fact that smuggling of birds was a flourishing business but this has been controlled largely due to increased vigilance in recent years.

(c) The number of birds smuggled out is not known. However, in the last 2 years 3 cases of attempted smuggling of birds have been detected.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) The steps taken by the Government to check smuggling of wildlife, including birds are given below:

(i) Hunting of Scheduled wild animals has been banned by law.

(ii) Central assistance is provided to State/UT Govts. for strengthening anti-poaching infrastructure.

(iii) Special schemes for protection and conservation of tigers, elephants

and rhinos and their habitat are being implemented.

(iv) Raids are carried out by the Wildlife Authorities whenever information of illegal trading in wild animals reaches them.

(v) A network of Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks has been set up for conservation of wild fora and fauna. Financial assistance is provided by the Central Govt. for development of National Parks and Sanctuaries on request from the State Governments

(vi) International trade in endangered species of animals and articles made therefrom is regulated under the provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

(vii) Regional and sub-regional offices of Wildlife Preservation have been set up mostly at the main export centres of the country to prevent smuggling of wildlife products.

(viii) Interdepartmental coordination is being enhanced with other enforcement organisations like Police, BSF, Customs, ITBP, Coast Guards ect. A training programme on CITES enforcement and implementation was also conducted for all these organisations at New Delhi in February, 1995.

(f) Three persons were arrested in the 3 cases of attempted smuggling of birds in the last two years.

Poaching of animals in Shimlipal National Park

5449. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the increasing incidence of illegal poaching of animals and destruction of forests by poachers as well as local tribals in Shimilipal National Park on the occasion of Akhand Shikar, a local customary festival;

(b) if so, the dtails thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to stop the illegal poaching of animals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) Government are aware of the incidence of illegal felling of timber and poaching of animals during the Akhand Shikar. The details have been asked for from the Government of Orissa and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) The steps taken by the Government to stop illegal poaching are as under:

(i) State Government has been advised to strengthen vigilance and intensify patrolling around the Similipal Tiger Reserve.

(ii) The State Government has set up 29 anti-poaching camps and mobilised field staff with wireless support and vehicles to keep a strict surveillance over the area during the 'Akhand Shikar' festival. District administration has provided additional support in the form of deployment of armed force at strategic locations during the period. Public awareness programmes have been launched by the Forest Department and the local NGOs related with tribal culture have been engaged to motivate the tribals not to indulge in "Akhand Shikar".

Grants/loans to industrial units closed down to meet environmental standards

5450. SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN:

SHRI J. S. RAJU:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Governmet have approved any scheme to give grants of loans to industrial units. closed down for meet